Kalyana-Kalpataru

Price: ₹ 6



Loving Kṛṣṇa

Vol. 64
No. 5

Gita Press, Gorakhpur

February
2019



Goddess Saraswatī

Selfless Service

Selfless service is one of the most powerful and effective aids in the purification of mind. Through *Karmayoga*, you allow your energies to be utilized in a dynamic way. When your energies are not well-utilized, you are inclined to *Tamas*—inertia, negativity and dullness. When you are *Tāmasika* your mind becomes like a transistor radio tuned to discordant music that emanates from so many other negative minds.

When you keep your mind involved in performing action that inspires and purifies, you rise beyond the negative sentiments that cloud your mind. You begin to realize that the things that created anger, hate and jealousy in your heart mean nothing.

Karmayoga is a process of spiritualizing all activity with the understanding that your entire life can become an artistic process leading to Self-realization. Imbued with this understanding, a *Karmayogī* converts every aspect of his work into an act of meditation and prayer.

A *Karmayogī* develops the attitude of renouncing or surrendering the fruit of action. Without looking for an egoistic reward or caring whether someone else is there to appreciate his actions, he performs his duties to the best of his ability with an internal sense of integrity. Although he makes the effort to be successful in every project, even if his actions do not yield the expected outcome, he will continue to perform his duties with patience. By not being attached to the fruits of action, he is able to stay balanced in gain and loss and will not be heart-broken over the vicissitudes of life.

—Swami Jyotirmayananda

RNI. No. 2347/57 Registration No. NP/ GR—122/2017-2019
Licensed to post without prepayment. Licence No. WPP/GR—04/2017-2019

Universal Reality

Peace is your birthright. For, in reality, your essential nature, your innermost real nature, is peace profound. The great Universal Reality, whom we refer to as God is immeasurable peace profound, unfathomable and limitless peace. Peace, therefore, is the eternal, unchanging reality. God Himself is peace. But the restlessness, the clash and conflict, the violence and warfare we see upon the surface of this planet earth today is the outcome of man's intransigence. It is the outcome of man's deliberate rejection of the sublime message of peace that God has been sending to this human world from time to time through His great messengers, through His divine messengers, the prophets, the saints, the messiahs, who have come to declare to man that he should walk the path of goodwill, harmony and friendship; he must recognise the oneness of the Supreme Universal Reality and as a consequence, should recognise the brotherhood of all mankind under the Fatherhood of the Supreme Universal Reality, which is one and non-dual.

—Swami Chidananda

Date of publication 1. 2. 2019

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥



KALYANA-KALPATARU

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

Vol. 64 February 2019 No. 5

Subhāṣitam

गङ्गायाः सलिलं शुभ्रं शुभ्रं च शशिमण्डलम्।
साधूनां हृदयं शुभ्रं शुभ्रं सत्कर्मणां यशः॥

The water of the river Gaṅgā is bright, the disk of the moon is bright, bright is the heart of saintly souls and such is the fame of meritorious deeds.

❑❑

C O N T E N T S

ILLUSTRATIONS

Subscription

Inland—
Annual ₹ 140

Abroad—
Annual ₹ 1800
Air Mail US $ 30
Bank collection charges US $ 6 Extra

websites: 1. www. kalyana-kalpataru.org 2. www.gitapress.org
e-mail: booksales@ gitapress.org

Editor—**Keshoram Aggarwal** Co-Editor—**Dr. Prem P. Lakkar**

Printed and Published by **Jagdish Prasad Jalan** for Gobind Bhawan Karyalaya
Gita Press, Gorakhpur (India)

The Secret of the Divine Name

—Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

There is not the least doubt that the Divine Name possesses extraordinary power of destroying sins. The statement, “Name—the destroyer of the entire stock of sins,” is wholly true; but due to their ignorance of the secret, people make improper use of this truth. They argue that when the Divine Name possesses this extraordinary power of destruction against sin, a sin may be committed now, and the effect of it may be washed away by the practice of *Japa* of a few names of God. Following this line of thought, they sink deeper and deeper into the mire of sin. They do not realize that if the above argument was true, the Divine Name instead of being a sterilizer of sins, will prove itself to be their aggravator. For, then under the shelter of the Name, people will begin to commit sins according to the promptings of their desires and the result of this will inevitably be a steep rise in the index figure of sins in the days to come as compared to what is obtained at present. Just as a robber committing robbery under the garb of a policeman receives a severer sentence than that of an ordinary burglar, even so the wretched person committing sin under the shelter of the Name becomes liable for a severer punishment. Commission of sin under the shelter of the Name is one of the ten famous crimes against the Divine Name. These ten crimes are as follows:—

सन्निन्दासति नामवैभवकथा श्रीशेशयोर्भेदधी-
रश्रद्धा श्रुतिशास्त्रदैशिकगिरां नाम्न्यर्थवादभ्रमः।
नामास्तीति निषिद्धवृत्तिविहितत्यागौ हि धर्मान्तरैः
साम्यं नाम्नि जपे शिवस्य च हरेर्नामापराधा दश॥

1. Blasphemy against pious and saintly souls. 2. Discoursing on the glory of the Divine Name before non-believers. 3. Differentiation between Viṣṇu and Śiva. 4, 5 and 6, Lack of faith in the Vedas, scriptures and words of the Preceptor. 7. Entertainment of the opinion that all statements of the scriptures glorifying the Divine Name are nothing but exaggerated praise. 8 and 9 Renunciation of prescribed duty and commission of prohibited act, on the strength of the Name. 10. Comparison of the efficacy of the Name with other forms of practice enjoined by the scriptures. These ten are the ten crimes against the Name in the practice of *Japa* of the names of *Bhagavān* Śiva and Viṣṇu."

He, who practises *Japa* of the Divine Name without taking precaution against the commission of the ten crimes stated above, does not at all understand the very secret of the Name. One should take recourse to the Name only after a proper understanding of this secret.

❑ ❑

It is said in the Hindu scriptures that just taking the name of God can give one salvation. When I first read this, I did not understand how it could be possible. But I learned that it is possible, when behind that mental prayer is all the hunger and longing of your soul. "My Lord, I love only you, I want only you, I crave only you."

—*Sri Daya Mata*

How to Be Eternally Happy?

—Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Remember : so long as you identify yourself with the body or the name and regard the living beings or inanimate objects of the world as your own you can never be happy; for the body and the name as well as the creatures and objects of the world are all imperfect and transitory and an imperfect and transitory object can never yield happiness. It is always attended with a craving to supply the deficiency and with the vexing fear of losing the object attained.

Remember : so long as you identify yourself with the body and look upon the creatures and objects of the world as your own, your nasty wretchedness and your dirty egotism will ever persist in you and continue to make you unhappy and uneasy of mind. When a part of space is enclosed by four walls and a roof is built over them, it assumes the form of a room, which turns out to be small in comparison with some and large as compared to others. Where it is small, it accounts itself small and has consequently to cringe before the larger ones; and where it is large it deems itself large in comparison to others and feels elated. The creatures and objects of the world too, however much they may be regarded as one's own by anyone, needs must be inferior to some and superior to others. Hence, they too must continue to be a source of humility and pride, which will take the shape of jealousy, malice, arrogance, conceit and so on, bringing newer and newer sorrows in their train.

Remember : so long as you identify yourself with the body and regard the creatures and objects of the world as your own you will never be free from the bondage of

mundane existence. You will continue to be clothed with newer and newer bodies and your contact with and separation from your beloved objects will never cease, and thus eternal happiness will ever remain out of your sight.

Remember: it is for being completely and finally rid of all sorrows and sufferings and for realizing the constant and everlasting bliss of absorption into Brahma, which is no other than you, that this human body has been vouchsafed to you. One should make the best use of it while there is yet time. Therefore, withdraw the feeling of I-ness from the body taking it to be a material, transient, perishable and unreal adjunct; and looking upon the creatures and objects of this world as illusory like the objects seen in a dream, destroy the very foundation of mineness. And identify yourself with the eternal, uncaused and ever undeniable Supreme Reality known by the name of the Spirit or the Absolute. Even as the space enclosed within a room may get rid of the misconception about its separateness and smallness and, realizing through ratiocination its undisputed identity with the infinite space, get merged in it, in the same way you too should get rid of your distinct Jīvahood, realizing it to be a creation of delusion, and be established in oneness with the spiritual essence, which is ever one, eternal, pure, awakened and identical with you. Nay, view all living beings and objects of the universe too as identical with the same essence. Rid of your false notion of I-ness and My-ness, you will thereby be able to realize the bliss of the integral, all-perfect, infinite and conscious Spirit, which is all-wisdom and which is your eternal and real nature—nay, you will be established in your essence, which is all-Truth, all-Consciousness and all-Bliss.

Remember : in the same way you can realize the object of your life by recognizing yourself to be none else than

a servant of the Lord and confining your mineness to the all-auspicious lotus-feet of the Lord. Be convinced that the Lord alone is your eternal and real friend and master, that His delightful and soul-ravishing lotus-feet are your only property and that to serve them unconditionally with intrinsic joy and without expecting any return is the natural course of your life. If you do this, you will be able to attain everlasting happiness by betaking yourself to the Lord, who is an embodiment of eternal, true, perfect and infinite joy.

Remember : then will your nasty wretchedness caused by want of worldly things disappear and your dirty egotism engendered by the acquisition of ephemeral things vanish. A divine humility will manifest itself in you, which will reduce you to a state of utter destitution and make you a favourite of the Lord. And along with it will appear that divine egotism, which will rid you of physical old age and death and will eternally raise you to the exalted position of a servant, a divine attendant of the Lord, the Supreme Ruler of all the worlds, Who is your best friend and Who is so fond of His servants.

❑❑

> The devotee who has bestowed his mind on God, no more aspires for the states of Brahmā still less for the sovereignty over the entire globe, rulership of the nether world or occult powers, acquired through the practice of *Yoga* nor does he seek even final beatitude divorced from God.
>
> —*Śrīmad Bhāgavata*

Worldly Ego (Ahaṁkāra)

—Brahmalina Swami Ramsukhdas

When the aim of a person is directed towards unreality (*Asat*) viz., to gain pleasure and accumulation of worldly goods, then his ego is, 'I am worldly' and it is called, worldly ego. When such a feeling gets intensified, a person always remains worldly. He certainly remains worldly while performing worldly actions and while practising spiritual discipline also he still remains worldly. Whatever devotional efforts, he makes, are directed towards fulfilment of his desires and that spiritual practice intensifies his pride of being an aspirant. Pride is the gross form of ego.

When a man is too much inclined towards pleasures and prosperity, this inclination leads him to selfishness and pride, which are the demoniac traits. The *Gītā* says : 'अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः' (*Gītā* XVI. 18); "They are bloated by egoism, power, pride, desire and anger", 'दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः' (*Gītā* XVII. 5); "They are imbued with hypocrisy and egoism'. Further, according to *Gītā* : 'पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ' (XVI.16); "Misled by ego, which is demoniac nature, such persons sink into a filthy hell."

If it is assumed that on achieving enlightenment or salvation (*Mukti*), the demoniacal form of ego is overcome and the self-oriented (identified) ego is not affected, that argument is not correct. The reason is that by the wiping out of the demoniacal ego, one escapes hell, but it does not lead to salvation. The latter can only be achieved by destruction of the self-induced ego. The demoniac ego, is a subtle form of essential self-ego, which stays within every

living being. Keeping in mind this identified ego, Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna : 'अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि' (*Gītā* XVIII. 58); "By fixing your mind on Me, you will by My favour, conquer all difficulties, but if your ego does not let you listen to Me, then you will be lost". Again it is said : 'यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे' (*Gītā* XVIII. 59); "If your ego forces you to say that 'I will not fight,' it will be futile, for nature will compel you to fight."

The ego is created by ignorance. *Yoga Darśana* says : 'अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः। अविद्याक्षेत्र मुत्तरेषां....' (II. 3-4); Knowledge destroys ignorance, when no ignorance is left, how can ego persist? If knowledge does not remove ignorance, then that is not knowledge. That is superficial learning, but not true and experiential knowledge. If identified ego is not destroyed, then as a tree grows from a seed, so this ego with the contact of materials, people, actions and conditions etc., will become demoniacal ego.

In the *Gītā*, where the means of knowledge have been discussed, Lord Kṛṣṇa refers to the elimination of ego : 'अनहङ्कार एव च' (XIII. 8). When an aspirant discards the ego, then on his salvation, how can it persist? No ego is left and there is complete destruction of the self-oriented (*Tādātmyarūpa*) ego. Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained further, the destruction of the self-centred ego as follows: In *Karmayoga*, by the expression : 'निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः' (*Gītā* II. 71); "Freedom from the sense of mineness and egoism". In *Jñānayoga*: 'अहङ्कारं.........विमुच्य निर्ममः' (*Gītā* XVIII. 53); "One who gives up egoism and the notion of mineness." In *Bhaktiyoga*: 'निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः' (*Gītā* XII. 13)., it says "One is free from mineness and egoism." All these expressions refer to the elimination of ego.

❑ ❑

Rāmarakṣāstotram (रामरक्षास्तोत्रम्)

The Method of '*Rāmarakṣākavaca's*' *Siddhi* (success)

In *Navarātra* everyday for nine days in early dawn, being free from ablution etc., putting on washed and clean clothes, sit in an easy posture on the seat of *Kuśā*. Having concentrated the mind on the benedictory Form of Lord Rāma, recite this sacred hymn, which bears great fruit, at least eleven times and if not possible, then seven times, daily at regular hours. The more faith a person has in the power of Lord Rāma, the more fruit the sacred hymn will bear. Though *Rāmarakṣākavaca* is a bit lengthy yet its short form can also work. It should be recited with such perfect peace and faith that in the course of time, it should be memorized.

Viniyogaḥ (विनियोगः)—Use of the hymn

अस्य श्रीरामरक्षास्तोत्रमन्त्रस्य बुधकौशिक ऋषिः श्रीसीतारामचन्द्रो देवता अनुष्टुप् छन्दः सीता शक्तिः श्रीमान् हनुमान् कीलकं श्रीरामचन्द्रप्रीत्यर्थे रामरक्षास्तोत्रजपे विनियोगः।

This *Rāmarakṣāstotra's* sacred text's sage is Budha Kauśika, deities are Sītā and Rāmacandra, metre is *Anuṣṭup*, power is Sītā, pivot is Śrīmān Hanumān and the use of the recitation of *Rāmarakṣāstotra* is done to please Lord Śrī Rāmacandra.

Dhyānam (ध्यानम्)

ध्यायेदाजानुबाहुं धृतशरधनुषं बद्धपद्मासनस्थं
पीतं वासो वसानं नवकमलदलस्पर्धिनेत्रं प्रसन्नम्।
वामाङ्कारूढसीतामुखकमलमिलल्लोचनं नीरदाभं
नानालंकारदीप्तं दधतमुरुजटामण्डलं रामचन्द्रम्॥

One should meditate on Lord Rāma having huge (grand) matted tresses, holding a bow and arrows, sitting

in *Baddha-Padmāsana* (tied cross legged sitting posture), wearing yellow robes, having blissful eyes excelling new lotus leaves, fixed on lotus faced Śrī Sītā, (who is) gracing the left seat, having very long arms extending to the knees, having cloud coloured handsome body and adorned with divine ornaments of various kinds.

Stotram (स्तोत्रम्)

चरितं रघुनाथस्य शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम्।
एकैकमक्षरं पुंसां महापातकनाशनम्॥ १॥

The expansion of Śrī Raghunātha's deeds is a hundred crore and its each and every letter is the destroyer of human beings' deadly sins.

ध्यात्वा नीलोत्पलश्यामं रामं राजीवलोचनम्।
जानकीलक्ष्मणोपेतं जटामुकुटमण्डितम्॥ २॥
सासितूणधनुर्बाणपाणिं नक्तंचरान्तकम्।
स्वलीलया जगत्त्रातुमाविर्भूतमजं विभुम्॥ ३॥
रामरक्षां पठेत्प्राज्ञः पापघ्नीं सर्वकामदाम्।
शिरो मे राघवः पातु भालं दशरथात्मजः॥ ४॥

Lord Rāma, dark complexioned like the blue lotus, lotus eyed, decorated with the crown of matted tresses, holding sword, quiver, bow and arrows in hands, destroyer of demons and Who as a sport, has incarnated Himself to protect the world; a wise man remembering of that ever existent and omnipresent Lord along with Jānakī and Lakṣmaṇa should recite this Rāmarakṣā, which fulfils all desires and destroys sins. Let Rāghava protect my head and let Daśaratha's son protect my forehead.

कौसल्येयो दृशौ पातु विश्वामित्रप्रियः श्रुती।
घ्राणं पातु मखत्राता मुखं सौमित्रिवत्सलः॥ ५॥

Let Kausalyā's son protect eyes, let Viśvāmitra's favourite protect ears, let protector of religious sacrifices protect nose and let the loving elder of Sumitrā's son protect face (mouth).

जिह्वां विद्यानिधिः पातु कण्ठं भरतवन्दितः।
स्कन्धौ दिव्यायुधः पातु भुजौ भग्नेशकार्मुकः॥ ६॥

Let the treasure of knowledge protect my tongue, let the Lord, Who receives obeisance from Bharata, protect my throat, let the holder of divine weapons protect my shoulders and let the breaker of Mahādeva's bow protect my arms.

करौ सीतापतिः पातु हृदयं जामदग्न्यजित्।
मध्यं पातु खरध्वंसी नाभिं जाम्बवदाश्रयः॥ ७॥

Let Sītā's husband protect hands, let Paraśurāma's winner protect heart, let the destroyer of Khara-demon protect the middle part and let the Lord, Who gave shelter to Jāmbavān, protect my navel.

सुग्रीवेशः कटी पातु सक्थिनी हनुमत्प्रभुः।
ऊरू रघूत्तमः पातु रक्षःकुलविनाशकृत्॥ ८॥

Let Sugrīva's master protect waist, let Hanumān's Lord protect *Sakthinī* (right upper parts above knees) and let the best in Raghu dynasty and destroyer of demon-family protect *Ūrū* (left upper parts above knees).

जानुनी सेतुकृत्पातु जङ्घे दशमुखान्तकः।
पादौ विभीषणश्रीदः पातु रामोऽखिलं वपुः॥ ९॥

Let the builder of Rāmasetu protect knees, let Rāvaṇa's killer protect thighs, let the giver of prosperity to Vibhīṣaṇa protect feet and let Lord Śrī Rāma protect the entire body.

एतां रामबलोपेतां रक्षां यः सुकृती पठेत्।
स चिरायुः सुखी पुत्री विजयी विनयी भवेत्॥ १०॥

The virtuous person, who recites this hymn for protection, which is endowed with Lord Rāma's power, becomes long-lived, happy, blessed with sons, victorious and modest.

पातालभूतलव्योमचारिणश्छद्मचारिणः।
न द्रष्टुमपि शक्तास्ते रक्षितं रामनामभिः॥ ११॥

The beings, that move in nether world, on earth or in sky and those that wander in disguise, can't have a look

at the person protected by Lord Rāma's holy name.

रामेति रामभद्रेति रामचन्द्रेति वा स्मरन्।
नरो न लिप्यते पापैर्भुक्तिं मुक्तिं च विन्दति॥ १२॥

By recollecting (remembering) the names 'Rāma', 'Rāmabhadra', 'Rāmacandra', a person does not get tainted by sins and gets pleasure and attains salvation.

जगज्जैत्रैकमन्त्रेण रामनाम्नाभिरक्षितम्।
यः कण्ठे धारयेत्तस्य करस्थाः सर्वसिद्धयः॥ १३॥

The person who learns by heart this sole hymn, which leads to victory over the world and is protected by Lord Rāma's name, all accomplishments come into his possession.

वज्रपञ्जरनामेदं यो रामकवचं स्मरेत्।
अव्याहताज्ञः सर्वत्र लभते जयमङ्गलम्॥ १४॥

The man who recollects this '*Rāmakavaca*' named Vajrapañjara, his order is not disobeyed anywhere and he gets victory and auspiciousness.

आदिष्टवान्यथा स्वप्ने रामरक्षामिमां हरः।
तथा लिखितवान्प्रातः प्रबुद्धो बुधकौशिकः॥ १५॥

The way Lord Śaṅkara bestowed in night in dream this '*Rāmarakṣā*', sage Budhakauśika noted it down in the same way after awaking in the morning. (15)

आरामः कल्पवृक्षाणां विरामः सकलापदाम्।
अभिरामस्त्रिलोकानां रामः श्रीमान्स नः प्रभुः॥ १६॥

Lord Rāma is our master Who is like the garden of *Kalpavṛkṣa* (the tree which grants all desires), Who ends all calamities and Who is the most handsome in the three worlds.

तरुणौ रूपसम्पन्नौ सुकुमारौ महाबलौ।
पुण्डरीकविशालाक्षौ चीरकृष्णाजिनाम्बरौ॥ १७॥
फलमूलाशिनौ दान्तौ तापसौ ब्रह्मचारिणौ।
पुत्रौ दशरथस्यैतौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ॥ १८॥

शरण्यौ सर्वसत्त्वानां श्रेष्ठौ सर्वधनुष्मताम्।
रक्षःकुलनिहन्तारौ त्रायेतां नो रघूत्तमौ॥ १९॥

Those Who are youthful, handsome, soft, mighty, big-eyed like lotus buds, wearers of bark and skin of black deer, eaters of fruits and roots, self-controlled, ascetic, celibate, givers of refuge to all beings, the best of all archers and destroyers of demon-family, let those Daśaratha's sons, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, two brothers protect us.

आत्तसज्जधनुषाविषुस्पृशावक्षयाशुगनिषङ्गसङ्गिनौ ।
रक्षणाय मम रामलक्ष्मणावग्रतः पथि सदैव गच्छताम्॥ २०॥

Those Who are holding bows for aiming, who are touching arrows and are holding quivers having inexhaustible arrows, let those Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa always go ahead on the way to protect me.

संनद्धः कवची खड्गी चापबाणधरो युवा।
गच्छन्मनोरथान्नश्च रामः पातु सलक्ष्मणः॥ २१॥

Ever prepared, youth armoured, holding sword in hand, holding bow and arrows Lord Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa, moving ahead of us, protect our cherished desires.

रामो दाशरथिः शूरो लक्ष्मणानुचरो बली।
काकुत्स्थः पुरुषः पूर्णः कौसल्येयो रघूत्तमः॥ २२॥
वेदान्तवेद्यो यज्ञेशः पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः।
जानकीवल्लभः श्रीमानप्रमेयपराक्रमः॥ २३॥
इत्येतानि जपन्नित्यं मद्भक्तः श्रद्धयान्वितः।
अश्वमेधाधिकं पुण्यं सम्प्राप्नोति न संशयः॥ २४॥

(The Lord's utterance is that) Rāma, Dāśarathi, Śūra, Lakṣmaṇānucara, Balī, Kākutstha, Puruṣa, Pūrṇa, Kausalyeya, Raghūttama, Vedāntavedya, Yajñeśa, Purāṇapuruṣottama, Jānakīvallabha, Śrīmān and Aprameyaparākrama—my devotee, by chanting these names daily with faith, undoubtedly receives more blessings than even the performance of

Aśvamedhayajña.

रामं दूर्वादलश्यामं पद्माक्षं पीतवाससम्।
स्तुवन्ति नामभिर्दिव्यैर्न ते संसारिणो नराः॥ २५॥

Those people who eulogize dark-complexioned like soft green Dūrvā, lotus-eyed, yellow-robed Lord Rāma with these divine names don't get entangled in worldly cycle.

रामं लक्ष्मणपूर्वजं रघुवरं सीतापतिं सुन्दरं
काकुत्स्थं करुणार्णवं गुणनिधिं विप्रप्रियं धार्मिकम्।
राजेन्द्रं सत्यसंधं दशरथतनयं श्यामलं शान्तमूर्तिं
वन्दे लोकाभिरामं रघुकुलतिलकं राघवं रावणारिम्॥ २६॥

I bow to Lord Rāma, the elder brother to Lakṣmaṇa, the best in Raghu family, husband of Sītā, very handsome, born in Kakutstha family, all merciful, treasure of virtues, devotee to *Brāhmaṇas*, absolutely religious, head of kings, loyal to truth, Daśaratha's son, dark-complexioned, calm-minded, most handsome in all worlds, unequalled in Raghu family, Rāghava, the enemy to Rāvaṇa.

रामाय रामभद्राय रामचन्द्राय वेधसे।
रघुनाथाय नाथाय सीतायाः पतये नमः॥ २७॥

Salutations to my master Rāma, Rāmabhadra, Rāmacandra, creator of Universe, Raghunātha and Sītā's husband.

श्रीराम राम रघुनन्दन राम राम श्रीराम राम भरताग्रज राम राम।
श्रीराम राम रणकर्कश राम राम श्रीराम राम शरणं भव राम राम॥ २८॥

Oh Raghunandana Śrī Rāma ! Oh Lord Rāma, elder brother to Bharata ! Oh steady warrior Lord Rāma ! give refuge to me.

श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ मनसा स्मरामि
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ वचसा गृणामि।
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ शिरसा नमामि
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये॥ २९॥

I keep Śrī Rāmacandra's feet in heart, I chant loudly glory of Śrī Rāmacandra's feet by speech, I offer salutations

to Śrī Rāmacandra's feet by bowing my head and I seek refuge in Śrī Rāmacandra's feet.

माता रामो मत्पिता रामचन्द्रः
स्वामी रामो मत्सखा रामचन्द्रः।
सर्वस्वं मे रामचन्द्रो दयालु-
र्नान्यं जाने नैव जाने न जाने॥ ३०॥

Rāma is my mother, Rāma is my father, Rāma is my master, Rāma is my friend. Gracious Rāmacandra alone is my all in all, besides Him I don't know anyone—don't know at all.

दक्षिणे लक्ष्मणो यस्य वामे च जनकात्मजा।
पुरतो मारुतिर्यस्य तं वन्दे रघुनन्दनम्॥ ३१॥

I bow down to Raghunandana whose right seat of honour is being occupied by Lakṣmaṇa, left seat of honour is being occupied by Jānakījī and the front seat of honour is being occupied by Hanumān.

लोकाभिरामं रणरङ्गधीरं राजीवनेत्रं रघुवंशनाथम्।
कारुण्यरूपं करुणाकरं तं श्रीरामचन्द्रं शरणं प्रपद्ये॥ ३२॥

I seek refuge in Śrī Rāmacandrajī, most handsome in all worlds, firm in battlefield, lotus-eyed, master of Raghu family, embodiment and treasure of compassion.

मनोजवं मारुततुल्यवेगं जितेन्द्रियं बुद्धिमतां वरिष्ठम्।
वातात्मजं वानरयूथमुख्यं श्रीरामदूतं शरणं प्रपद्ये॥ ३३॥

I seek refuge in Rāmadūta Hanumān, whose speed is like mind and whose force is like wind, who has control over his senses and who is foremost among the wise.

कूजन्तं रामरामेति मधुरं मधुराक्षरम्।
आरुह्य कविताशाखां वन्दे वाल्मीकिकोकिलम्॥ ३४॥

I bow to Vālmīki who like a cuckoo sitting on the branch of poem cooed the sweet-lettered delicious name Rāma-Rāma.

आपदामपहर्तारं दातारं सर्वसम्पदाम्।
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम्॥ ३५॥

I bow again and again to Lord Rāma Who rids of calamities, provides all kinds of wealth and Who is fascinating to everybody.

भर्जनं भवबीजानामर्जनं सुखसम्पदाम्।
तर्जनं यमदूतानां रामरामेति गर्जनम्॥ ३६॥

The thundering sound—'Rāma-Rāma' roasts all world-seeds, provides all kinds of happiness and prosperity and terrifies the messengers of the Yama—the god of death.

रामो राजमणिः सदा विजयते रामं रमेशं भजे
रामेणाभिहता निशाचरचमू रामाय तस्मै नमः।
रामान्नास्ति परायणं परतरं रामस्य दासोऽस्म्यहं
रामे चित्तलयः सदा भवतु मे भो राम मामुद्धर॥ ३७॥

Śrī Rāma, the best of kings gets victory. I adore Lord Rāma, husband to Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth). I offer salutations to Rāmacandra Who destroyed the entire army of demons. There is no refuge greater than Rāma. I am a servant to that Rāmacandra. Let my mind ever remain absorbed in Rāma. O Rāma ! Kindly lead me to salvation.

राम रामेति रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे।
सहस्रनाम तत्तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने॥ ३८॥

Lord Mahādeva says to Pārvatī—O Pretty-faced ! The name 'Rāma' is equivalent to 'Viṣṇusahasranāma' (a thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu). I ever remain engrossed in this charming name, Rāma-nāma—'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma'.

इति श्रीबुधकौशिकमुनिविरचितं श्रीरामरक्षास्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम्।

Thus '*Śrī Rāmarakṣāstotraṁ*' composed by Śrī Budhakauśika, a sage is complete.

❑❑

Mṛkaṇḍusūrakṛtastavam (मृकण्डुसूरकृतस्तवम्)

The word *Śivam* means auspiciousness. We get all the greatness by reciting Śaṅkara's name continuously. *Mārakaṇḍeya,* son of *Maharṣi* Mṛkaṇḍu, who was destined to die at the completion of sixteen years of age, acquired the great boon of a life of sixteen years age for ever by seeking protection from Śrī Śiva, holding his idol (Liṅga) fast and crying for his grace. The following is his eulogy in praise of the Lord. It is believed to have been authored by Śrī Ādiśaṅkarācārya.

1. रत्नसानुशरासनं रजताद्रिश्यंग निकेतनं
शिञ्जिनीकृत पन्नगेश्वर मच्युतानलसायकां।
क्षिप्रदग्ध पुरत्रयं त्रिदिवालयैरभिवन्दितं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Ratnasānuśarāsanaṁ rajatādriśyaṅga niketanaṁ
Śiñjinīkṛta pannageśwara macyutānalasāyakām I
Kṣipradagdha puratrayaṁ tridivālayairabhivanditaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

I seek refuge in that Candraśekhara who has adopted the Kailāsa region as His abode, the highest peak of the white mountain as His seat and the coils of the best of snakes as His comfortable ground with His arrow like fire emanating from His everlasting face and who burnt Tṛpura in a moment and who is praised and honoured non-stop by all the *Devas*. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

2. पञ्चपादपपुष्पगन्धपदांबुजद्वयशोभिता
भाललोचनजातपावक भग्धमन्मयविग्रहं ।
भस्मसिक्तकलेबरां भवनाशनं भवमव्ययं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Pañcapādapapuṣpagandhapadāmbujadwayaśobhitā
Bhālalocanajātapāvaka bhagdhamanmayavigraham I
Bhaṣmasiktakalebarāṁ bhawanāśanaṁ bhavamavyayaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

I seek asylum in that Candraśekhara whose both lotus-feet are shining brightly with the sweet smell of the heavenly flowers viz. Pārijāta, Mandāra and Sāntham and of trees viz. *Kalpa* and sandal, who destroyed Kāmadeva by the fire from His eye on the forehead, who has smeared His body with the ash from this cremation ground, who destroys sorrows in life and who bears no blemish. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

3. मत्तवारणमुख्य चर्मकृतोत्तरीयमनोहरं
पंकजासन पद्मलोचन पूजितांघ्रिसरोरुहं।
देवसिन्धु तरंग शीकर सिक्तशुभ्रजटाधरं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Mattavāraṇamukhya carmakṛtottarīyamanoharaṁ
Paṅkajāsana padmalocana pūjitāṅghrisaroruham I
Devasindhu taraṅga śīkara siktaśubhrajaṭādharaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

When I am holding fast that Candraśekhara, who adorns Himself with the skin of the elephant in rut, whose lotus-feet are worshipped by *Brahma* and Mahāviṣṇu and whose locked hair is whitened by the drops of the fast flowing Devagaṅgā. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

4. यक्षराजसखं भगाक्षहरं भुजंगविभूषणं
शैलराजसुतापरिष्कृत चारुवामकलेवरं।
क्षवेल नीलगलं परश्वध धारिणं मृगधारिणं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Yakṣarājasakhaṁ bhagākṣaharaṁ bhujaṅgavibhūṣaṇṁ
Śailarājasutāpariṣkṛta cāruvāmakalevaram I
Kṣawela nīlagalaṁ paraśvadha dhāriṇaṁ mṛgadhāriṇaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

I am holding fast with deep devotion that Candraśekhara

who eliminates those who are keen about desires, who is the friend of Vaisravana, king of Yakṣas, who adorns Himself with the crawling snake, who has allotted His left side to Pārvati Devī, daughter of the king of mountain (Parvatam) and whose neck is blue with poison, armed with axe and holding a deer. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

5. कुण्डलीकृत कुण्डलेश्वर कुण्डलं वृषवाहनं
नारदादि मुनीश्वरस्तुत वैभवं भुवनेश्वरां।
अन्तकान्तकमाश्रीतामर पादवंशमनान्तकं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Kuṇḍalīkṛta kuṇḍaleśwara kuṇḍalaṁ vṛṣavāhanaṁ
Nāradādi munīśwarastuta vaibhavaṁ bhuwaneśwarām I
Antakāntakamāśrītāmara pādavaṁśamanāntakaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

I depend on Lord Candraśekhara to protect me from Yama. He wears garland of snakes and rides bull. He is praised by sages like Nārada. He is honoured as God of the whole world. All the *Devas* take Him as heavenly Kalpa tree. He is beyond time. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

6. भेषजं भव रोगिणामखिलापदमपहारिणं
दक्षयज्ञविनाशनं त्रिगुणात्मकात्रिविलोचनं।
भुक्तिमुक्ति फलप्रदं सकलाघ सुघनि बर्हणं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Bheṣajaṁ bhava rogiṇāmakhilāpadamapahāriṇaṁ
Dakṣayajñavināśanaṁ triguṇātmakātrivilocanam I
Bhuktimukti phalapradaṁ sakalāgha sughani barhaṇaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

Lord Candraśekhara is the remedy for all the worldy sorrows. He removes all dangers, providing protection to all. He destroyed *Yajña* of Dakṣa. He is a combination of all the three qualities, viz. *Sattva*, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*. He has three eyes. He provides *Bhukti* and *Mukti* (food

and Liberation) and destroys all sins. I am seeking refuge in him. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

7. भक्तवत्सलमर्चितं निधिमक्षयं हरिदंबरं
सर्वभूतपतिं परात्परमप्रमेयमनुत्तमं।
सोमवारिनभुहताशना सोमपानिलखाकृतिं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Bhaktavatsalamarcitam nidhimakṣayaṁ haridaṁbaraṁ
Sarvabhūtapatiṁ parātparamaprameyamanuttamam I
Somavārinabhuhatāśanā somapānilakhākṛtiṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

The Lord is worshipped by His beloved devotees—He is the durable best treasure. He wears the wide spread black clouds as clothe. He controls all *Bhūtagaṇas* (created beings). His greatness is indescribable. He wears moon and water and ash from the cremation ground. When I am holding that Candraśekhara fast. Let me see what Yama will do to me!

8. विश्वसृष्टिविधायिनं पुनरेव पालनतत्परं
संहरन्तमपि प्रपञ्चमशेष लोकनिवासिनं।
क्रीडयन्त महर्न्निशं गणनाथयुथ समन्वितं
चन्द्रशेखरमाश्रये मम किं करिष्यति वै यमः॥

Viśvasṛṣṭividāyinaṁ punareva pālanatatparaṁ
Saṁharantamapi prapañcamaśeṣa lokanivāsinam I
Krīḍayanta maharnniśaṁ gaṇanāthayutha samanvitaṁ
Candraśekharamāśraye mama kiṁ kariṣyati vai yamaḥ II

Lord Candraśekhara creates, protects and destroys the whole world as if it even a game in a moment. He goes on enjoying with His *Bhūta* groups. When I am holding Him for protection what Yama will do with me?

Mārkaṇḍeya was clasping God with devotion noted in firm belief and confidence that He would protect him from Yama coming to take his life. Lord Śiva readily responded and granted him permanent relief from death and a life of sixteen years of age for ever, making him a *Cirajīvī*,

though his name does not occur in the list of seven *Cirajīvīs*. Destiny can be changed by devotion, a lesson to humanity. A parallel Puranic character is Satī Sāvitrī who changed her destiny by her determined devotion. Faith can change fate.

(Courtesy: Śrī Guruvāyurappan)

Sender: *R. T. Nathan*

❑ ❑

Saint is he who is ever united with Divine knowledge, so much so that he has no pride left in him, not of being even a saint. If it is not so, he is like a green fuel, which on being burnt gives only choking smoke to the annoyance of others. Unless the fuel is dry, it will neither be ignited nor give best to others. So too, is the case with the saints. If the heart is not cleared (changed) there is no use colouring the clothes. He can neither be useful to himself nor of any good to others.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Believe always in the spiritual powers in the infinite capability of those with whom you come in contact. Give up judging, never form any particular opinion, never condemn. Forget not that the some fellow of today may turn out to be a great hero or a great saint tomorrow.

Never Despair

—Swami Chidananda

The Supreme Being is of the very nature of grace, and its all-pervading presence means the presence of grace at all times—with us and all around us. We live, move and have our being in Divine grace.

Gurudeva Swāmī Śivānandajī was a manifestation of this grace. All the great saints and sages, all the great illumined and liberated men of wisdom are verily proof of God's grace. They are the exteriorised manifestation of God's grace.They come into the human world as light in the darkness, as pointers to the path of divine perfection and liberation. They constitute an assurance of the ever-present availability of God's grace to man if only man will turn towards God. God's grace works through these great messengers.

Holy Master was very fond of one expression. Frequently he used to write as well as say; "*Nil desperandum!* Never despair!" Never despair because grace is at hand. God will never abandon you. Even when you think that you are finished, that your spiritual life is ruined, that you have lost everything, that all your efforts to overcome yourself have been to no purpose—you are defeated, beaten, routed—even when you are in such a condition, God's grace comes and saves the situation, and raises you up from defeat to victory.

This fact is brought out in the manifestation of God in the form of Kārtikeya, the second offspring of Lord Śiva. Even when Lord Śiva appears to be completely absorbed

in deep meditation on His own blissful divinity, nevertheless He is not entirely careless or oblivious of the welfare of this projected phenomenal appearance. At times, even from the deepest of His meditation of blissful Self-awareness, He comes out in answer to the call of devotees. And the emergence of Kārtikeya is one outstanding example of this fact. He is made to manifest out of Lord Śiva, and He responds to the supplication of the defeated gods.

Kārtikeya is supreme grace from the absolute, transcendental Universal Spirit. As that transcendental Being is all-pervading and indwelling, His grace, therefore, is also all-pervading, indwelling and ever present. It also manifests within your own heart as right enquiry and right discrimination. When you are in great extremity, suddenly an idea flashes in your heart: "This is what I must do at this moment." This is grace in movement, grace actively working within you. Grace, therefore, is ever at hand. Hence the expression of the Holy Master: "*Nil desperandum*. Never despair." Struggle on! Never give up!

Somewhere I came across a poem which I thought it worthwhile to include in the little booklet Inspiring Thoughts and the heading of that poem is "Don't Quit." It is when you think that everything is lost, that you are about to lose, to fail, the poem says, it is only then that help is nearest at hand, and in a thrice so-called defeat will become victory, you will immediately come out successful. When you think that you are about to fail, that all is lost, immediately you will become successful, for grace is always at hand.

Therefore, don't quit. Arise, awake and attain illumination, become liberated. That is why you are here. Fulfil your divine destiny. Grace is ever at hand!"

❑ ❑

Way to Attain Bliss in Old Age

—Swami Ranganathananda

In many countries, old age is a botheration, absolutely dull, without any interest; and they want to make it interesting by extraneous means, generally by alcoholism. Nowadays even drugs are used. Mostly smoking is also there. I went to some old age homes in America, but I saw that there the people felt no joy in life; they wanted to kill their boredom by all sorts of extraneous means, which are not at all good. This should not happen in India because of our wonderful spiritual tradition and our interest in this tradition.

More and more people are taking interest in the spiritual heritage of India so that even though we are old and weak, our mind is joyous because of a profound philosophy of human development given to us through our *Upaniṣads* and other books. '*Vedānta*' is the word we use, a beautiful system of philosophy, for total human development and perfectness. We have it in the form of *Upaniṣads* the *Gītā*, Buddha's teachings, Śaṅkarācārya's commentaries and today in the message of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, Swāmī Vivekānanda and other teachers like Ramana Maharṣi.

The one difference between the Western approach to philosophy and ours is, our philosophy you can question, you can investigate, but in the West whatever philosophy is there, nobody can question. So, the rational mind is not satisfied. Whereas in India, even the most rational minds are satisfied by questioning and getting adequate answers to their questions. Take for example, Śaṅkarācārya's

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi. It is a wonderful book wherein a student puts questions to the teacher about the nature of human life, our real destiny and so on. And in answer, the teacher takes the student step by step towards moral development. Then a little spiritual hunger is aroused, followed by a search for what steps we will have to take. Finally they lead him to spiritual realisation.

Any kind of attempt to drown our boredom by external means is weakening. It brings no sense of joy, but when we are related to our own infinite *Ātman* which is our real nature, which is of the nature of bliss, then we find inner joy coming from within, without any external stimulus, which is generally a costly affair. That is why drug takers are generally thieves. They steal from their own fathers; they will also steal from neighbours. So, here is a teaching, which can save us from this problem. But we have to implement it. Till now we did not need it, as we lived in a feudal society. But now we need it, everybody needs it. That is the importance of meeting in the evening once in a while, carrying on some sort of spiritual practice in day-to-day life, some meditation, some *Bhajana*—these are all very enriching experiences. Our *Bhajana*-culture particularly is conquering the western world now. They all want *Bhajana*. In the motor cars they put the *Bhajana* cassettes. When they take me in the car they put on our *Bhajanas*. This was a common thing: in every household I found our *Bhajana* cassettes.

Bhajana is a tremendous experience; if you cannot achieve the knowledge of Brahman, at least you can enjoy the Brahman through singing *Bhajana*. That is why *Bhajana* is a spiritual experience, meditation also is a spiritual experience. Just going to the temple, taking a coconut, ringing a bell, etc., produces no spiritual experience.

But in *Bhajana* there is a spiritual experience and the whole world is seeking that spiritual experience.

Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa in one of his sayings has told us that there are three joys available to every human being. The word for joy is *Ānanda*. Those three *Ānandas* are available to every being. The first is called *Viṣayānanda. Viṣaya* means sense objects, sensory experiences like eating and other pleasures. This is called *Viṣayānanda—Ānanda* coming from external objects. We don't look down on *Viṣayānanda* in *Vedānta*. A baby wants only *Viṣayānanda*, he does not know anything else. Everyone can have *Viṣayānanda*, but we should know that there are also higher levels of *Ānanda*. That is what *Vedānta* says. A baby is fond of *Visayānanda* but it must get other *Ānandas*—going to school, getting knowledge and so on. Let it proceed with this *Ānanda* at that physical level—the *Viṣayānanda*. The second is called *Bhajanānanda*—a wonderful *Ānanda* that comes from within, not from without. A part of this experience comes from *Bhajana* or meditation and study of various spiritual books, even scientific research. All this joy comes from within. This is called *Bhajanānanda*. Essentially it means singing God's name. All our saints have sung *Bhajanas*—*Guru* Nānaka has done it, so also all the other Sikha *Gurus*. Then there is Śaṅkara Deva in Assam, Mīrābāī and Sūradāsa in North and so many saints in South India. Their songs constitute a tremendous source of spiritual education and strength for our nation. They have spread throughout India and influenced everybody. That is why Kenneth Galbraith, the American Ambassador in Delhi, once came to the Planning Commission and told the Planning Commission Members, "Well, I have seen poverty everywhere in the world, dismal poverty and I have seen poverty in India, but Indian poverty has uniqueness

because there is a gleam in the eyes of the poor people here, which I did not find anywhere else and the poverty does not make for crime in India whereas in all other countries poverty means drunkenness, crime and a sense of newer frustration."

With our poor people, though their pocket is poor, their heart is not poor. They help mutually, if you go to them also, they help.

So, our people have to cultivate this culture coming from this *Bhajanānanda*, given by the great saints of both North and South India. We have to retain that *Bhajanānanda*. That comes from within. When we are boys and girls, we do experience *Bhajanānanda* in some measure. But we can really enjoy it when we finish with all responsibilities and are retired from day-to-day pressures. Now, why should we stick to *Bhajanānanda* all the more? Because the third level of *Ānanda* is very high. They call it *Brahmānanda*. When you actually realise God, immense joy will be your share. But *Bhajanānanda* is available to us, *Brahmānanda* is too high, *Viṣayānanda* is too ordinary. That is why *Bhajanānanda* is most important for all of us. Just when the day's work is over, responsibilities are over, we sing *Bhajanas* or listen to *Bhajanas*. It is very good, it is a great experience. Gāndhījī sang *Rāma Dhuna* even during India's political struggle. Sometimes, there were one lakh people present and how much they were influenced by Gāndhījī's *Rāma Dhuna*!

Bhajanānanda is open to all. We all can have a little joy from within. We get refreshed thereby. This is how we develop our spiritual life through applying appropriate techniques. *Viṣayānanda* is all right when we are young. Youth is beautiful. But when the afternoon of life comes, then we must try to find joy from within, not from without.

Otherwise there is big trouble. Carl Jung in his book, Modern 'Man in search of a Soul' specially mentions it: "Forenoon of life has one objective. Afternoon of life has another objective. Don't carry the forenoon into the afternoon." By the word 'Forenoon' is meant how to get established in the world, earn money, raise a family, enjoy the delights of life and get a good name in society. That is called 'forenoon.' Now don't carry this into the afternoon (old age), otherwise there will be a great diminution of personality and want of inner qualitative enrichment. When our work is over in the world, our objective must be to find out what will brighten our old age, brighten the age after 60. Old age is not dismal at all, you can brighten it. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa puts it in a beautiful saying:—When you have work to do, hold the feet of God with one hand and do the work with the other hand. When the work is over, hold the feet of God with both the hands. That is the way of putting it, that is all.

In this way *Bhajanānanda* becomes a tremendous source of spiritual strength and inspiration and that moodiness, that kind of frustration that affects many old people will not be there. You will always he cheerful, thinking, 'Though the body is weak, there is something in me which makes me full of cheer.' *Pāyo jī maiṁ to rāma ratana dhana pāyo*—one of the great *Bhajanas* we sing in Hindi meaning thereby, "I have obtained the gem of Rāma in my heart, I don't miss anything." We must be able to say this to ourselves: "Yes, some profound truth has come, this life is really wonderful. When we have nothing else to do, we have got something very big to do, which I had to neglect during my hard days. Now I am free.' That is how the whole of post-retirement life becomes a life of joy of a different type—purer and nobler life, with the

blessings of everybody in the house. You can smilingly bless all them. Don't expect anything from anybody, for we are finding joy from within ourselves and that joy we communicate to others. Normally that is not there. If there is no spiritual background in life we don't communicate the joy at all. We communicate only our worries and troubles. Here, note that we have digested all our troubles. After all, physical pain will always be there. 'All right, as you say, the old buggy motor car (our physical body) becomes older, but the mind is different. I have just trained that mind.'In this way, we can bring a spiritual quality to our life.

(To be continued)

Sender—*Nanda Lal Tatiya*

❑ ❑

Don't grieve for what you don't have. The most materially successful man may have the greatest worries and unhappiness. In contrast, I have seen in the Himalayas some of them have no food, nothing at all, nor are they beggars. They are richer than the world's millionaires. Because they are the friends of all, people love them and love to feed them. Such are the real kings of the earth. Saints like them are greater than any crowned king. If without food, such men can be like kings, peaceful and without worry, why can't you?

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

God-realisation through Altruistic Attitude

—N. Prasanthi Vidhya

God's plan for man's evolution is work.

Love of God and service of man is the secret of true life. The meaning of true life is service and sacrifice. Life is meant for service and not for self-seeking sacrifice! We need to hold our life for the service of others. The more the energy we spend in elevating and serving others, the more the divine energy which will flow to us.

Altruism by definition is the unselfish acts to better the wellbeing of others disregarding the wellbeing of self. These include behaviours that are beneficial to others that show generous tendencies, kindness to others and helpfulness. Altruism *Aka Karmayoga aka Sevā* in Sanskrit translates as a selfless service without expectations for service provided. The idea of selfless service is an important concept in most Indian religions.

The first step in the spiritual path is selfless service of humanity. Selfless service is the watchword along the road to salvation. Selfless service of humanity prepares the aspirant for the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness or the life of oneness or unity with God. Aspirants should direct their whole attention in the beginning towards removal of selfishness by protracted selfless service.

Indulging oneself into selfless activities and services brings the instant of inner bliss and happiness. The surges of joy one experiences seeing others happy due one's own actions are divine. The smile of a baby, the look after you feed the hungry and the appreciations of a help rendered

to an anonymous stranger etc., are the best gifts human have, which nourishes the soul. These feelings have a dramatic impact on our inner consciousness. It is when one experiences the divine sparks. Mother Ṭeresā, a true *Karmayogī*, declared that, "As to my calling, I belong to the world". Mother Ṭeresā kept reiterating the inner joy and wellbeing that she experienced through her selfless service (altruism). It's important to note that individuals experience their God or higher power in many different ways, but that all religions and beliefs appear to experience these connections in a similar way. Selflessness is a neuropsychological foundation of spiritual experience."

Aspect that harmonises selfless service to worshipping God is its holistic nature. The concept of worshipping or spirituality in *Vedic* context comes from the idea of unconditional love of the Godhead. This is the higher concept of devotion that underlines the relationship between the supreme enjoyer and the enjoyed. It is the relation that exists between God and human beings, we being the enjoyed and He being the supreme enjoyer. Only unconditional love and devotion towards the Lord can bring liberation or "*Mokṣa.*" If we have satisfied someone's soul, consider that we have satisfied the Lord. And we should remember, it is only the body that is satisfied through mundane activities, not the soul.

In *Sāṁkhya* philosophy, *Niṣkāma Yoga*, is described as one of the basic forms of *Karmayoga*, which is a path to Liberation. It is the act of performing something without any expectation in return. It is also a central theme of the *Bhagavadgītā*, where it is idealised as a way to realise the absolute. In Verse 47, Chapter II, Kṛṣṇa speaks to Arjuna—

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities and never be attached to not doing your duty.

Through selfless service and charity, we can develop the heart and cleanse the lower mind. Selfless service alone can purify our heart and fill it with divine virtues. Only the pure in heart will have the vision of God and we become a servant of humanity. This is the secret of attaining God-realisation.

❑ ❑

Poverty is the panacea for an evil man's blindness arising from pride of wealth. For, a poor man can sympathise with other poor people as fellow sufferers. A man whose body and senses have been weakened by hunger and who is always feeling the need for more food, will naturally turn away from cruel and oppressive actions.

—Śrīmad Bhāgavata

There should be nothing on earth that you cnnot give up for God. If you cannot renounce at least some of your bad habits, words, materiality for Him, you are a weakling and God cannot be attained by weaklings. Mental strength is absolutely necessary in order to find God.

—Divine Romance

Human Life is not for Sensuous Pleasures

Lord Ṛṣabha began: This human body in the mortal world does not deserve to be given up to the pursuit of sensuous pleasures, which are really a source of misery and which are enjoyed even by swine, dogs and other animals (that feed on ordure). It is worthy of being devoted. My beloved sons, to sublime austerities whereby the mind is purified; and from purity of mind follows the unending bliss of absorption into the Absolute. The wise speak of service rendered to exalted souls as an open gate to liberation and the fellowship of those who are fond of women as the door opening into hell. And they alone are really great who are even-minded, exceptionally calm and composed, free from anger, kind-hearted and pious or again they who regard love offered to Me as the only object of human pursuit, who take no delight in the company of men solely engaged in pursuits merely calculated to nourish their body nor in a household consisting of wife, children and earthly riches and who have no selfish interest in the world beyond the maintenance of their body. An erring soul commits sin only when he endeavours to gratify his senses. I however do not regard those actions as good, from which, has followed this body, which though really non-existent, is yet a source of misery to the *Jīva*. The real nature of the soul remains obscure due to ignorance only so long as the *Jīva* does not enquire into the truth about the Spirit. Again so long as actions continue to be performed, the mind remains disposed to activity and it is due to such a mind that the *Jīva* remains tied to a body. The true nature of the Spirit

being thus veiled by ignorance, the past actions of a man render his mind prone to activity. And so long as there is no love for Me, Lord Vāsudeva, the *Jīva* is not rid of its identification with a body. So long as the *Jīva*, oblivious of its real self-interest, does not come to its senses and realize the activity of the *Indriyas* (the senses of perception and the organs of action) as unreal (something not belonging to it), the fool soon forgets its own essential nature and finding a home providing sexual enjoyment (as a characteristic feature), suffers torments (of various kinds) there.

The union as husband and wife of a man with a woman, the wise speak of it as another knot binding their hearts together apart from the subtle knot, in the shape of identification with the body, already existing in their heart individually. It is due to this other knot that over and above the body, mind and senses etc., a man erroneously regards a house, fields, children, kinsmen and wealth as either himself or his own. When however, the hard knot in the shape of mind—formed in the heart of this *Jīva* by its *Karmas* (past actions)—gets loose, then and then alone does it turn its back on this relation of husband and wife and shedding its ego (the cause of transmigration) and freed from all bondage, reaches the Supreme. By adoring Me and depending on Me, the pure Self and Preceptor of all; through freedom from thirst for enjoyment as well as by enduring pairs of opposites (such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain); by realizing the fact that a living being is beset with calamities everywhere even in the other world; through a spirit of enquiry (into the truth of things) through asceticism and by abstaining from actions done with some interested motive; through actions done for My sake by hearing My stories everyday; through the fellowship of those who look upon Me as their sole deity; by singing

My praises; through even-mindedness, tranquility and freedom from animosity; through a desire to give up identifying himself with the body, house etc., through a careful study of scriptures dealing with the Spirit; by living in solitude; by thoroughly controlling the breath, the *Indriyas* the senses of perception as well as organs of action and the mind; through faith in saints and the holy books; through continence, through constant vigilance in performing one's sacred duties; through control of the tongue; through wisdom illumined with realization and penetrating enough to perceive My presensce everywhere; and through deep meditation, My sons, and equipped with firmness diligence and discretion, a clever man should endeavour to tear the veil known by the name of Ego. Remaining vigilant all the time, he should completely shake off by this means, as taught by his preceptor the bondage in the shape of the knot of egotism in the heart, which has been brought about by ignorance and which, again, is the storehouse where all the latencies of *Karma* lie deposited. Then he should desist even from this endeavour.

A king or a father or a preceptor, whoever aspires to reach My abode or looks upon, My grace as the (sole) object of human pursuit. should thus instruct his ignorant subjects, sons or pupils, and should in no case urge them to actions (done with an interested motive), getting not angry with them even if they do not listen to him and persist in doing such actions knowing that they erroneously regard such actions as the only way to happiness. What object would a man gain by directing a fellow-man to such actions? For thereby he would be throwing the blind fellow into the abyss of metempsychosis. Men who crave for objects of sensuous enjoyment alone, possessed as they are by an inordinate lust for such enjoyment, are really

themselves blind to their real wellbeing. That is why they enter into enmity with one another for crumbs of pleasure and have no idea of the endless misery which lies in store for them as a result of such enmity, deluded as they are. Seeing such foolish men steeped in ignorance (in the form of worldly activity), no sensible and compassionate man, who is himself aware of his own (real) interests, would urge them to resort to such ignorance again, any more than he would direct a blind man who is following a wrong track to continue on that path. A preceptor is no preceptor, a relation is no relation, a father is no father, a mother is no mother, a deity is no deity, nor is a husband a husband, who is unable to redeem his pupil, relation, son, votary or wife fallen into the whirlpool of transmigration.

❑ ❑

Some seekers complain that it is difficult to know God. Yet He is the easiest to know, because He is not apart from us. He has never been away from us. If He were, we would not be here, we would not even be. God has not separated Himself from us. Man has separated himself from God. When our thoughts are turned outward, engrossed in the multiplicity of the finite world, we disunite ourselves from Him. This is the simple truth.

—Sri Daya Mata

Read and Digest

Happiness is not to be found in the sense objects. It is you who bestow happiness on the worldly objects.

*   *   *

Indulgence in the sense-pleasures is varily the animal life.

*   *   *

The moment you become desireless, you transcend the world and become fit for the divine love.

*   *   *

Virtues like equanimity, cheerfulness and freedom from malice manifest a man when he becomes desireless.

*   *   *

Nothing can touch you if you inwardly love God.

*   *   *

Never be satisfied with less than the awareness of God.

*   *   *

Everyone seeks ideal love, ideal joy, that love, that joy is God.

*   *   *

God alone is fulfilling seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added upto you.

❑ ❑

A Labour-Boy's Honesty

One day a rich man called a labour-boy to clean down cobwebs. He began to clean down webs in a room which was well decorated. He was enjoying himself by seeing the decoration-pieces in the room. In the room he was all alone, so he began to see those pieces by picking them up. At that time he saw a very beautiful watch, set with jewels and diamonds. He picked up this watch and gazed at it. He was enticed by its beauty. He said to himself, "How fine it would have been, if he had got such a watch!" The sinful thought of stealing the watch came to his mind but, the next moment, he cried out. "Oh! What a sinful thought had come to my mind! If I am caught red handed while stealing, what a sad plight I'll have to face! The Government will punish me and imprison me. In the prison I shall have to break stones and indulge in such other drudgery. Once I lose honesty, no one will believe me and allow me to enter his house. Even if I am not caught red handed, I can't escape God's observation. My mother always says that we don't behold God but He always beholds us. We can't conceal any action from Him. He can see us even in the dark and even knows what comes to the mind."

Having said so, the boy's face fell, his body perspired and he began to tremble. Having put the watch at its original place, he uttered loudly, "Greed is a deadly sin. Greed induces a man to commit theft. Oh! What had I to do with the watch of the rich people? Greed instigated me to commit this crime but gracious God saved me from doing so, because I remembered what my mother had

advised me. Now, I'll never be greedy. In fact it is far better to remain poor, by following the righteous path, than to become rich by committing a theft. A thief can never sleep soundly and comfortably, howsoever rich he may be. Oh! It is the result of the thought of committing a theft that I am so much grieved. Had I committed the theft, it would have caused much more suffering to me." Having uttered so, he was again engaged in the work calmly.

The mistress was observing his activities and was listening to what he was saying. Suddenly she came to the boy and asked him, "O boy! Why have you not taken the watch?" Having heard her words, the boy was wonderstruck. He sat on the ground in a pitiable and helpless condition and began to tremble. He could utter no words, and his eyes filled with tears.

Having seen the pitiable condition of the boy, the mistress took pity on him and she said to him in a sweet voice, "Dear son, don't be terrified. I have listened to what you said. Inspite of being poor, you are so gentle, honest and you also fear God and righteousness. So I am very much pleased with you. Your mother is blessed that she has given you such a good advice. God is very much gracious to you that He saved you from getting entangled in the snare of greed. Son! Beware of greed. I am going to make arrangement for your board and books etc. Start going to school from tomorrow. May God bless you!" Having said so, the mistress embraced him and wiped his tears. Then she gave him some money as a reward for his honesty.

Having heard the mistress's sympathetic words, the boy's heart leapt up with joy. He expressed his gratitude to her. He started going to school and as a result of his hard work and truth, he became a talented scholar and a well reputed person.

❑❑

The two Birds

—Swami Sivananda

These two beautiful birds
Are inseparable companions.
They dwell upon one and the same tree.
One of them eats the fruits,
The other looks on without eating,
And is very happy.
One bird rejoices and dances
When it eats the sweet fruits.
It is sunk in sorrow,
When it eats the bitter fruits.
It grieves and is helpless.
It tries to become like the other bird.
But it again eats the figs,
And feels very miserable.
At last it becomes like the other bird.
The bird that eats is *Jīva*.
The bird that looks on is *Īśvara*.
The sweet fruit is pleasure,
Result of good deeds.
The bitter fruit is pain,
The result of evil deeds.

❑ ❑

Essence of Hinduism

—H. E. Dr. Kailash Nath Katju

In order to find what is the essence of Hinduism you should not go to philosophers or to the great wise men and consider what they have enunciated or taught to be the essence of Hinduism. That would not be decisive of the matter. It would be only their individual opinions or the opinions of their group or followers. The real test is: has the doctrine and philosophy of life found acceptance with the Hindu mass mind. If it has, well and good, if it has not, then you may have merely another body of dissenters who are permitted to hold to their course of belief. Hindu mass mind holds toleration of other religious beliefs and views as an essence of Hindu religion. But toleration is one thing and general acceptance quite another and mere toleration of any doctrine, which is a departure from deep-rooted beliefs would not make it wield any great influence over the Hindu mass mind for any great length of time. Now, take Gāndhījī. He denounced the caste system. He denounced untouchability. He said that if the caste system lives and if untouchability lives, Hinduism would die. That may be so. The fact, however, remains that in spite of onslaughts upon it for the last 2,500 years ever since the days of Gautama Buddha the caste system in its broad outline has continued to survive and it may be argued that it has prevented disintegration of Hindu society itself into bits during all these days. Of course the modern world confronts it with difficult problems. It has not to face a completely unprecedented situation. Up till now Hinduism has never experienced real democratic form

of Government. Now with one man, one vote and all classes of people, high caste and low caste, touchables and untouchables, wielding political authority, whether the caste system would survive, is anybody's guess. Many might be inclined to say that Hinduism has shown great powers of adaptibility and that it is like a porcupine which while withdrawing into itself resists all attacks, and therefore, no matter what the political developments and repercussions might be, the social structure divided into four broad compartments would resist all innovation and remain unaltered; or it might be the other way, it might crumble completely. And then the question would arise—what would remain, what would be the essential distinctive feature of Hinduism? Will it be the doctrine of *Karma,* the doctrine of a series of births, the cycle of birth and death, the doctrine of *Avatāras*? All these questions would lead to enormous speculations.

❑ ❑

The divine man regards the universe as his own self and every living being as his own form. Such a man cannot develop any animosity with or scorn against any one. His peace cannot be disturbed. You will concede that no man punishes his teeth, if they injure his tongue.

We must be sincere with God. What is the use of saying—"Lord I love you", if the mind is away on something else? But take the name of God and say it first once with pure love or over and over chant it with even deeper yearning and concentration; and it will change your life.

The Story of Puṇya and Pavana

—*Swami Jyotirmayananda*

In each embodiment you view yourself as born into a particular family with a particular history of prosperity and adversity. As you grow you build your own empire of family and friends. But when you die and move on to another embodiment, all those realities are forgotten and new ones take their place.

In *Yoga Vasiṣṭha* there is a story of two brothers, Puṇya and Pavana, who were sons of very saintly parents. When their parents died, grief invaded their minds. However, Punya was older and had studied the Vedic scriptures. He began to reflect upon the teachings that he had received from his father and he attained enlightenment.

Pavana could not give up his grief, so his elder brother, showering his compassion, said, "O my brother, why are you grieving? You are greiving for our departed parents, but what about the parents of your previous embodiments? You should be grieving for a thousand fathers and a thousand mothers! We have not lost just one father and one mother. In every embodiment there were parents who were just as dear. Why aren't you grieving for all of them?"

In other words, in each of your thousands of embodiment you had so many people you loved and depended upon, so many who depended on you. Then, when you moved out of each embodiment, you left those realities completely behind. Now, in your present embodiment, you might have been reborn in the very same town in which you had previously died and every day you walk by your old house and see your grownup sons and daughters. But now

you simply pass by disinterestedly, and you have nothing to do with their problems. New attachments have taken their place.

Breaking the spell of delusion is the purpose of existence. Unless you break it you cannot enjoy the blessings of God that pour down at every moment in this world. Divine Grace pours down like monsoon rains, but if the cup of your heart is inverted due to Moha, not a single drop goes into it. Straighten it up, and surely you will find that "Your cup runneth over." That sound of your spirit overflowing with Divine grace is the most beautiful sound imaginable!

❑ ❑

He who has no enmity or quarrel with anyone and is devoid of hopes and fear—to such a man all the quarters are ever full of joy.

Neither have I any fear of death nor have I in my mind any differentiation of worldly caste, creed, sex etc. I was never born. As such, I have no worldly relations —father, mother, brother, friend, preceptor or disciple. I am Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. I am God. I am God.

—*Shankaracharya*

Two Ways

—Mehta Ranjeet Maljee Sahib

यह संसार हाट बनियाकी, सब जग सौदे आयो।
चतुर माल चौगणा कीन, मूरख मूल गँवायो॥

"This world is like a market place where the wise man increases his capital fourfold while the idiot loses it entirely."

Thus there are two ways of gain and loss open to every body; let him make his choice. The wise man is one who chooses the way of gain while the idiot takes to the way of loss. By gain in its widest sense is meant the accomplishment of our purpose in life, which may be expressed in other words as the realization of a healthy, happy, good and honourable life. Such a life can only be the result of a right use of all the faculties and resources great or small granted to us by providence.

Out of all the creatures inhabiting this wide world, only human beings have been endowed with certain extraordinary powers—physical, intellectual and spiritual—which are the glory of this universe.

These powers can lead us to the highest pinnacle. Therefore, let us fully develop them and wisely use them. The test of wisdom lies in foreseeing results and consequences and in rightly analyzing causes and effects. As universal experience shows, everyone wants to be happy but our *Ṛṣis* have explained that happiness must be distinguished from pleasure and for emphasizing this distinction they have used the words 'श्रेय' and 'प्रेय.' 'श्रेय' means what is good i.e., what will bring us some gain and improvement although for the

moment it may not be agreeable; this is something quite different from 'प्रेय' which means what is pleasant or agreeable. A striking instance of this is supplied by the use of quinine for a person suffering from malaria. For the time being, it tastes very bitter and is unpleasant and disagreeable but it is good and therefore liked and used because it drives away malarial fever.

The wise man is therefore one who chooses the way of Good and is not tempted by the momentary glare of pleasure. The reverse is the case with the idiot who will not care to consider the ultimate consequences of his actions in all the fields of his activities. He will always be attracted towards fleeting pleasures in disregard of consequences.

In order that we may increase our wisdom, it is essential that we must come into contact with wise men either in person or in the form of books in which their experiences and injunctions are recorded. As we see around us, everything is affected more or less by what it comes into contact with. Even the elements like air and water are fundamentally affected by their surrounding. Human mind and intellect are also constituted in such a manner that they are very much affected by their surroundings.

Let us, therefore, create healthy surroundings for our bodies, minds and intellects and scrupulously eschew and avoid everything that is likely to contaminate them. This is the way of gain and of wisdom. This path leads us to success and happiness here and hereafter.

The consequences of choosing the wrong path by abusing our faculties and resources for the sake of momentary pleasures are evident from the huge mass of pain, misery, trouble and discord that we see in this world. The chief characteristics of the wrong path are vanity and luxury. Therefore, let us shun them as if they were germs of plague or cholera.

Let us keep away vanity and luxury at a very great distance by cultivating self-control, love of simplicity, sincerity and an ardent desire to help our fellow-men by becoming strong and using our strength for the good of society.

❑❑

Ever loving the company of saints and accounting the enjoyments even of heaven as well as final beatitude as no more than a blade of grass, tenaciously adhering to the cult of devotion but avoiding bigotry and giving up all perverse reasoning, fond of singing and hearing God's glories and devoted to His name and free from attachment to the world, arrogance and infatuation—the felicity that such a man enjoys, is known to him alone who has become one with God, the embodiment of supreme bliss.

Persons who do not understand the ways of God often have the notion that spiritual perfection means the perfection of the body too—that the body of a person who is in love with God, will not be subject to physical disease. Nonsense! One who persists in this idea as himself attached to physical form, the body is too important for him.

Who is the Actor?

—Basanta Kumar Chattopadhyaya

There are some passages in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā* from which, it would appear that the individual soul is not the performer (कर्ता) of acts. The *Upaniṣads* say—

हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुꣳ हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम्।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायꣳ हन्ति न हन्यते॥

(*Kaṭha*., I. 2. 19)

"If the killer thinks that he kills and the killed thinks that he is killed, both of them are ignorant. Neither does the one kill, nor is the other killed."

If the individual soul does not perform any act, then who performs it? The *Gītā* gives the reply. The qualities, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, perform the acts; the soul identifies itself through ignorance with these qualities and thinks that it performs the acts.

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः।
अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते॥

(*Gītā* III. 27)

Śrīdhara in his commentary on the above quoted verse says that acts are performed by the organs of sense (इन्द्रिय); these organs are born of *Prakṛti* and hence they are called प्रकृतेः गुणैः Again the *Gītā* says that the wise man who sees that there is no performer of acts except the *Guṇas* and knows that Substance (the *Paramātmā*), Which is superior to the *Guṇas* attains *Mokṣa*.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति॥

(*Gītā* XIV. 19)

Again the *Gītā* says, that *Prakṛti* is the cause of the transformation which is going on in the universe, (i.e., *Prakṛti* performs all act) the soul feels pleasure and pain.

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते॥

(*Gītā* XIII. 20)

From all these passages it would appear that the soul does not act; it is *Prakṛti* or its components, the *Guṇas* or the *Indriyas,* which perform acts.

But the correct conclusion on this question as on all other questions should be sought in the *Brahma-Sūtras*. As it is well known, for the Hindu the supreme authority is the *Vedas*, which were not written by men but were revealed by the Supreme Being. The doctrines of the *Vedas* are systematized in the *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā* and the *Uttara Mīmāṁsā* systems of philosophy. The Pūrva *Mīmāṁsā* gives only tentative conclusions, The final conclusions are to be found in the *Uttara Mīmāṁsā* or the *Vedānta* philosophy written by Bādarāyaṇa, who is no other than Vedavyāsa. Let us see what the *Vedānta* philosophy or the *Brahma-Sūtras* have to say on this question.

The *Brahma-Sūtras* say that the individual soul (the *Jīva*) is the performer of acts.

कर्ता शास्त्रार्थवत्त्वात्।

(II. 3. 33)

"The individual soul is the performer of acts, Then only the injunctions of the *Śāstras* can have any meaning." The *Śāstras* contain various injunctions, e.g. "One who wants heaven should perform sacrifices (यजेत स्वर्गकामः). "One who seeks emancipation should worship Brahma." (मुमुक्षुर्ब्रह्म उपासीत). If the soul had no power to perform acts, these injunctions would be meaningless. The very term '*Sāstra*'

implies that it makes commands. Commands can be issued to conscious beings that would understand those commands. They cannot be issued to unconscious objects like *Prakṛti* (Matter) or *Indriyas* (organs of senses) or Buddhi (intellect). Hence it must be concluded that the injunctions of the *Śāstras* are meant for individual souls who are conscious and who have the power to perform acts.

What, then, about the passages quoted above from the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*, in which, it has been stated that acts are not performed by the soul but by *Prakṛti* (Nature) or the evolutes of *Prakṛti* like Buddhi (intellect) or the *Guṇas* (*Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*)? If the unconscious *Prakṛti* and its transformations like *Buddhi* (which are also unconscious) cannot comprehend commands and cannot act, are the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā* wrong? Also is there any conflict between the doctrines of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*, on the one hand, and those of *Vedānta* Philosophy, on the other?

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* says, as has been pointed out above, "When the killer thinks that he kills and the killed thinks that he is killed, both of them are ignorant. Neither does the one kill, nor is the other killed." What is meant here is that, the soul being indestructible, there is no killing, and hence neither the one kills nor is the other killed. Again the *Gītā* says, "Everywhere acts are performed by *Prakṛti* (Nature); due to *Ahaṁkāra* the soul embraces wrong notions and thinks that it acts." What is meant here is that in worldly transactions the soul acts in a particular way due to its association with the *Guṇas*,—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. That the soul does act is clear from the following verse: "One who thinks that the soul alone is the performer does not see the real truth."

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 16)

It is stated in *Gītā* (XVIII. 13-14) that whatever act is performed depends upon five objects, viz, (1) the body, (2) the soul, (3) organs of sense, (4) the activities of vital airs, *Prāṇa*, *Apāna*, and so on and (5) the Supreme Being—

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे।
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम्॥
अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम्।
विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम्॥

Thus the mistake lies not in thinking that the soul is the performer (*Kartā*) but in thinking that the soul alone is the performer. Any particular act, which is performed, depends on four other objects besides the soul. That the actual performer of acts is the soul is clear from the fact that in the latter verse the soul is referred to as *Kartā* (performer). There can therefore, be no doubt that in the opinion of the *Gītā* the soul is the performer of acts, although it gets, its urge to perform a particular act from some other objects besides the soul. Towards the end of the discourse the Lord says to Arjuna, "You think that you will not fight. But your nature will make you fight." (*Gītā* XVIII. 57). Thus though the soul has the power to do an act, what particular act it will do depends upon external circumstances in which the soul is placed. Later on the Lord says, "I have told you the hidden knowledge; ponder over it earnestly and then act as you will," (*Gītā* XVIII. 63). Finally the Lord says, "Think always of Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, bow down to Me." In this way you will attain to Me" (XVIII. 65). All this shows that the

doctrine of the *Gītā* is not in variance with the doctrine of the *Brahma-Sūtras*, viz, the soul is the performer of acts. It is therefore, in the fitness of things that the soul suffers the consequences of all acts performed by it. As regards the question whether the Almighty power of God is or is not hampered by the fact that the soul can perform whatever act it likes, it may be observed that all the five objects referred to in *Gītā* XVIII. 14 are parts of *Brahma* and hence it follows that the act which is performed is what *Brahma* desires. The *Vedānta* says:—

परात् तु तच्छ्रुतेः।

(*Brahma-Sūtra* II. 3. 41)

Here '*Para*' means *Paramātmā*, the Supreme Spirit. This aphorism means that the individual soul derives its inclination to perform a particular act from the Supreme Spirit, *Brahma* (परात्). This is because the *Vedas* say so (तच्छ्रुतेः). The *Vedas* say—

एष ह्येवैनं साधु कर्म कारयति
तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्य उन्निनीषते।
एष उ एवैनमसाधु कर्म कारयति
तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्यो नुनुत्सते॥

(*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* III. 9)

"It is *Brahma* who makes him perform good acts whom He wants to lift higher. And it is He again who makes him perform evil acts whom He wants to reduce to lower rank." The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says—

"He who controls the soul from inside is your soul."

The *Bhagavadgītā* says—

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥

(XVIII. 61)

"O Arjuna, the Lord resides in the heart of all beings

and with the help of His *Māyā-Śakti* makes them move even as a man who makes puppets dance."

The Lord does not make persons act in different ways according to His whims, but according to the desires and efforts of those persons themselves, The *Vedānta* says:—

कृतप्रयत्नापेक्षस्तु-विहितप्रतिषिद्धावैयर्थ्यादिभ्यः।

(*Brahma-Sūtra* II. 3. 42)

"The Lord makes persons act according to their efforts. Thus, the injunctions and prohibitions in the *Śāstras* get justified," When a man wants and tries to do good acts, the Lord makes him do good acts and gives him the reward therefor. What a man wants to do depends upon his nature, which again depends upon his previous acts. As the creation is without beginning, every being has always some store of good and evil acts, which determine his present conduct and future state.

In this way the doctrines of free will and the omnipotence of *Brahma* are reconciled. Tennyson has put it beautifully in his "In Memoriam"—

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

❑ ❑

Train Your Heart to Feel the Brotherhood of Man

—Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

All mankind should open its heart to Jesus great message: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." That is the Christ inspiration I love so much. I want to make that message a living reality, to give it a practical application. Colour prejudice is the most foolish of all man's displays of ignorance. Colour is only skin deep. God gave darker skin pigment to races that originally lived under climatic conditions requiring greater protection from the sun, a purely practical measure; therefore, white, olive, yellow, red or black skin is nothing to be particularly proud of. After all, the soul wears a bodily over coat of one colour in one lifetime and other hues in other incarnations. So the colour of one's complexion is a very superficial thing. To have any colour prejudice is to discriminate against God, who is sitting in the hearts of all the red, white, yellow, olive and black peoples of the world. Besides, it is well to remember that whoever hates any race will surely reincarnate in that bodily form; thus does the karmic law force man to overcome his soul-stifling prejudices. Train your heart to feel the brotherhood of man—that is most important.

Although Jesus' teachings were preordained to establish their strongest foundation in the West, he chose an incarnation in an Oriental body and in the Jewish race, which has had a long history of persecution, because he wanted to demonstrate the folly of judging others according to distinctions of race and colour. True Christianity must be

lived; racial divisions must be banished. Prejudices and lack of real brotherhood are causes of war and disunion among God's children. We must work at eradicating all incitements to war; in hate and prejudice lie bombs and misery. Jesus warned:".....for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." It is not the sword, but the practice of Chirst principles that shall ultimately free the world. In the highest sense, God alone protects you. You can best help this world by ideal living, as taught by Christ and all spiritually enlightened ones. Above all else, love God; don't you see that the whole answer is in His hands? When He will push aside the screen of mystery, you will see the answer to all that was theretofore obscure and unfathomable.

Some Westerns consider the Hindus heathens; they don't know that many Hindus consider Westerners heathens also—ignorance is fifty-fifty everywhere. I am sometimes aksed if I believe in Jesus. I reply: "Why such a question? We in India reverence Jesus and his teachings, perhaps more than you do."

In order to love Christ you must live what he taught, you must follow the example of his life. Jesus said: "...whosoever shall smite Thee on Thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." India has practised this teaching more than any other nation. Many who call themselves Christian do not even apply it; they say that it is a beautiful philosophy, but if you were to slap them they would return twelve slaps, a kick and may be a bullet! Anyone who so retaliates is not a true Christian or lover of Christ, for that is not the spirit of the all-forgiving Jesus.

Every time you see the symbol of the Cross it should remind you of what it stands for—that you must bear your crosses with right attitude, even as Jesus did. When you mean well and still you are misunderstood or mistreated,

instead of being angry you should say, as did Christ: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Why forgive one who wrongs you? Because if you angrily strike back you misrepresent your own divine soul nature—you are no better than your offender. But if you manifest spiritual strength you are blessed and the power of your righteous behaviour will also help the other person to overcome his misunderstanding.

Those eternal principles of truth and righteousness taught by Jesus we take very seriously in India—we take them literally, without rationalizing them to suit our purposes. Jesus said: "And everyone that hath forsaken houses or brethren or sisters or father, or mother, or wife, or, children or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." That spirit of renunciation for God is all-pervasive in India. Especially in olden days it was the ideal of every man to give at least one part of his lifetime to God alone.

God Does Not Like to be Forgotten

Complete renunciation is not necessary for everyone, but if you forget God while fulfilling your material duties, God will not like it. Give time to Him alone, without work. I always save time in the morning and night for God and the rest of the day I serve Him wholeheartedly. The Lord says in the *Gītā*: "Whatever actions Thou dost perform...dedicate them all as offerings to Me. Thus no action of Thine can enchain Thee with good or evil *Karma*." You came on this earth for God. It is His world, not yours. You are here to work for Him. Life will very much disappoint and disillusion you if you labour only for yourself, because eventually you will have to leave everything; you will be forced to practise renunciation then!

The message of Christ is one of compassion and

forgiveness, renunciation (in spirit if one cannot do it in actuality), morality, brotherly love and unity and equality and supreme love for God. Remember Jesus' admonition: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?"

❑ ❑

The sun cannot be affected at all, whether its reflection falls in the Gaṅgā water or in the drain water in a gold vessel or in an earthen pot. The reflection of the sun will be all alike. In the same way, why should one have misgivings about the primal soul which is embodiment of eternal Bliss and unbounded sea of knowledge? Why should we discriminate between a Brahmin and a low-caste sweeper?

—*Shankaracharya of Manisha Panchaka Stotra*

When one sees God, the universe vanishes entirely. It is the ignorance, called *Māyā*, which makes you see this universe separate from God or Brahma. Remove this ignorance and see the reality, so to say face to face. This is God-realisation.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Gleanings from a Saint's Teachings

The three well-known paths of the pilgrim of the spirit—*Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jñāna*—are but the fields of extension for the three inherent qualities of man—*Kriyā-Śakti*, *Bhāva-Śakti* and *Vicāra-Śakti*.

The best use of *Kriya-Śakti* is *Niṣkāma* service of fellow-beings, which melts away selfishness and egotism and unites one with the one Life. The best use of *Bhāva-Śakti* is the kindling of love for God, which draws the devotee closer and closer to the Divine. The best use of *Vicāra-Śakti* is the awakening of the quest for Truth, which culminates in Self-realization.

In *Jñānayoga* action remains in the form of renunciation and *Bhāva* in the form of under-current. In *Bhaktiyoga* action remains in the form of selfless service and *Jñāna* as the hidden light of the goal. In *Karmayoga Bhāva* takes the form of renunciation of all selfishness, and *Jñāna* the form of unity with the all-pervading one Life.

To the *Karmayogī* all work resolves into worship. The *Bhaktiyogī* sees but his Lord everywhere and in everything. The *Jñānayogī* rejoices in the Self, with the Self.

The three paths merge in one and the same goal, where there is perfect unity. The differences appear only in emphasis on the surface along the pathways.

Brahmacaryāśrama is that stage of life in which man diligently seeks to acquire discrimination between right action and wrong action and garners wisdom through intellectual study and character-building (involving also body-building).

Gṛhasthāśrama is that stage of life in which whatever attachment to pleasures of the senses one is not able to discard through deep thought, he does through the experience of the same, subject to a code of discipline and the rules prescribed by *Dharma*, and thereby rising above them, and serves the other three *Āśramas*.

Vānaprasthāśrama is that stage of life in which one acquires dispassion for the world of the senses through the experience of *Gṛhasthāśrama* and therefore, one learns to control his mind and senses by *Tapas* and through contemplation of the Divine and service of society.

Saṁnyāsāśrama implies the erasing of all distinctions of stages and an effort to realize Truth or the Divine.

The root of all sins is to regard oneself as the body and mind. For that leads to the negation of true theism and the involving of oneself in countless complexes and desires.

Self-purification is an essential prerequisite to Self-realization. As the removal of all outer deposits from a piece of cloth means the cleaning of the cloth, so does the removal of hankering after and attachment to self-indulgence mean the purity of the heart. The purified heart automatically rises above impure *Pravṛtti* and soars into *Nivṛtti*, merging into its source. That is *Sahaja Samādhi*, which is the natural state of a Self-realized man.

Virtue is not acquired from outside. What remains after the renunciation of vice is virtue, in its natural, pristine state.

To keep dwelling on one's faults beyond the time when the fault is committed, is an even greater fault than the original fault. The constant feeling 'I am a sinner' makes a vicious circle. 'I am a *Sādhaka* aspiring for the sinless state' should be the right, positive attitude.

The body and the mind are only mechanisms of nature

which are given to man to use. The man on account of indiscrimination identifies himself with them and takes upon himself the limitations of the same. Even virtues acquired under this wrong identification are only a snare; for an egotistic virtue is the seed of many a vice. But those who treat the body and the mind as a temporary loan from Nature are not involved in the limitations of the same.

There is no *Pravṛtti*, however dear, of which man does not feel weary at one stage or another. One loves to eat, but at some stage he feels surfeited. One loves to walk, but at some stage he desires to rest. One loves to see, but at some stage he desires to close his eyes. One loves to hear, but at some stage he desires not to hear. Wealth appears lovely; but at some stage man says to it 'Now you remain in the safe; I should like to sleep now'. At some stage. the lover seeks separation from the beloved, the child from the mother and mother from the child, friend from friend—to rest. This shows that man can never be satisfied for all time with any of the component things, which sooner or later drive him to *Nivṛtti*.

Man's innermost thirst for Truth or God can never be satisfied with any component beings, things or circumstances. The most pleasing set of things or circumstances are like a well-decorated house where you may be without a friend, a body without a soul. Devoid of theism man is like a lonely souls; ornamented body, a well-decorated house, beautiful garden, but a lone resident therein.

The very fact that nothing is able to destroy the natural yearning of man for joy shows that the Lord of joy is ever calling man to his hidden heritage.

The right use of circumstances implies hard work, which makes for release from work, not constant thinking or worry about the work, which only goes to bind a man

in chains of attachment.

It is far better to be good in one's own conscience, instead of feeding ourselves on the opinions and certificates of others about our goodness; for they only drive and hide the evil deeper into our being.

If we reflect deeply, we shall see that true virtue is natural to man, while vice is unnatural. For instance, no one asks a person who speaks the truth, "Why do you speak the truth?" But only to a person who tells a lie, one says, "Why do you tell a lie?" and so on.

All the multifarious social and political problems, which beset us and persist in this age are due to the fact that we do not approach them with a pure heart and with righteous means.

When the leaders, men of learning, of a nation fall a prey to selfishness, the nation is destroyed. Unless the leaders and men of learning of a nation acquire true discrimination and desirelessness, the nation and its people cannot make true progress. The true progress of society will be possible only in the measure in which the society is inspired and led by persons of discrimination and desireless souls. The *Guru* seeks to reform the world through knowledge, the leader through laws, the administrator through power. If we wish to be among these, we have to reform ourselves first by being our own *Gurus* i.e. conducting our own lives in the light of *Viveka*, by being our own leaders—i.e., building our character, by being our own administrators—i.e., controlling our mind and senses. Only he who has done this, can be a true *Guru*, a true leader and a true administrator of the world.

Dharma can only be propagated by men who lead a life of *Dharma,* not by men who lead a life of *Adharma* but talk of *Dharma*. *Dharma* cannot be taught through

talks; it can only be taught through men whose lives 'drip' *Dharma*.

The best and the most altruistic materialist considers the giving of more to and taking less from the world as the height of altruism; but for the theist, altruism consists of giving away everything and one's all. Only such people can be the real leaders of men and real lawgivers. Laws made by desireless souls and Governments composed of selfless servants of the people only can establish a society blessed with love, justice and peace. Spiritual leaders of men, while raising the standerds of life and happiness of the people, are pointers to the life beyond; whereas leaders who are materialists only, in spite of their promoting means of richer living, create psychological complexes making for the torture of man.

The mind of the true servant is always absorbed in the One Life he serves, not in the world of appearance. To a theistic server, service becomes an end in itself, not a means to an end.

True *Bhajana* takes place only once in life. The turning of one's back to the world and face towards the Divine is true *Bhajana*.

Freedom from fear can never be attained unless one rises above all component life. Only he can be free from all fear whose mind is detached and not a slave of any desired set of things or circumstances.

Joy and sorrow are two faces of the same coin, an inherent nature of every component being or thing. We can rise above them only by treating them as instruments of our *Sādhanā*—to be utilized in service and in renunciation respectively—and not making the mistake of treating them as our life.

A desireless soul is not afraid of even death, but awaits

death as a prospective passenger awaits the train when the signal is down.

Many persons pose *Vairāgya* with the world because they have had disappointments, frustrations and bereavements in the world. They, however, retain their attachment to their bodies. This is false *Vairāgya* and only produces *Dweṣa* towards others, which is another name for *Rāga*; for *Rāga* and *Dweṣa* are two sides of the same coin. The body is the world in miniature, is made of the same stuff; and indeed for the individual consciousness the world is a projection of one's body-consciousness. True *Vairāgya* springs from one realizing the phantasmagoria of the body. Then only one is truly detached from the world and is dissociated from it completely. It is impossible to be detached from the world while one is attached to one's body. As long as one is identified with one's body, one is bound to be attached to the world and the pose of *Vairāgya* is a passing reaction, a remedy worse than the disease.

The world is too much in our contemplation, which crowds out the contemplation of God. In proportion as we shed away the contemplation of the world mirage, our minds will receive the light of God, that is Truth.

Why do our eyes not see eternal Beauty? Because they are content to play with the fleeting forms of beauty.

Why does not the mind find eternal *Rasa?* Because it contents itself with fleeting pleasures.

Why does not this 'I' attain eternal life? Because it contents itself with transitory life.

❑ ❑